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On the Cover: Four talented underclassmen are battling for the QB job. Photos by Brian Davis '01

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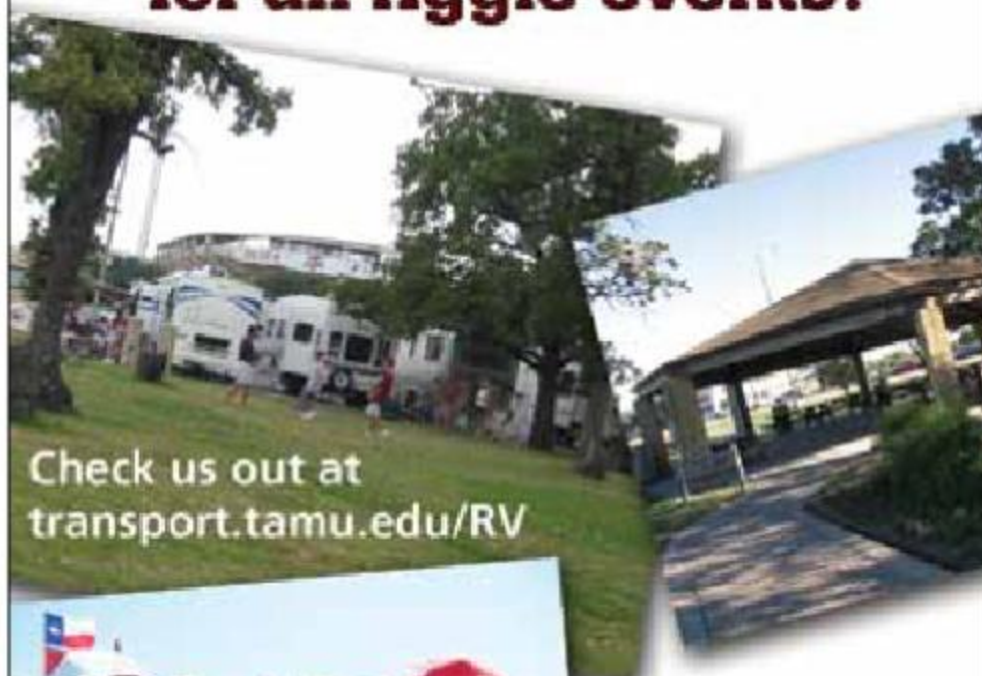
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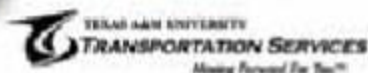
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Howdy!

It has been a while since I – or my artwork – has graced this column of *Aggieland Illustrated*. But, as the official staff loser of the 2nd Annual Bracket Challenge, here I am.

If you missed out on this year's contest, sponsored by Sierra Condos, I feel bad for you. We had lots of great prizes, including an iPad 3, Kindle Fire and a Blu-ray player.

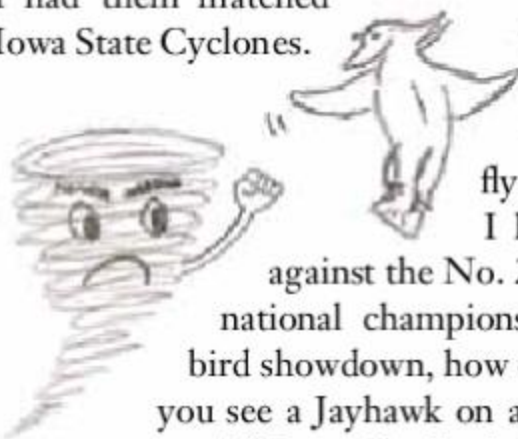
I thought I would take this opportunity to break down how I make my picks and how close I was to greatness.

Mascots. Seems simple, huh?

I pit mascots against mascots and use high-level scientific reasoning to determine the outcome of the match-up. For example, the No. 6 seed San Diego State Aztecs vs. No. 11 seed NC State Wolfpack. Although the Aztecs were really good at creating calendars, they didn't stick around for very long. But wolves have been around for centuries. And they have fangs. I got that pick right by the way.



Going into the Final Four, I was one of only a handful of people that had the No. 4 seed Louisville Cardinals in the hunt, but I had them matched up against the No. 8 seed Iowa State Cyclones.



Even though Cyclones are pretty tough to beat, everyone knows that birds can just fly away from them.

I had the Cardinals facing off against the No. 2 seed Kansas Jayhawks in the national championship game. In terms of that bird showdown, how often – outside of Kansas – do you see a Jayhawk on a Christmas card or old lady's sweater? Never. Cardinals, being the much more likable bird, can be found on both. And Jayhawks aren't even real.

Unfortunately, the Cardinals ended up being easy prey for the eventual champion Kentucky Wildcats. But, had the Cardinals won those two games, I would have been the bracket winner. Not just for the staff, but the overall champion. My method works. Next year, maybe my picks will play out as nature intended.

For everyone else, be sure to follow us on Twitter and like us on Facebook for the next chance to win.

XOXO,
Natie

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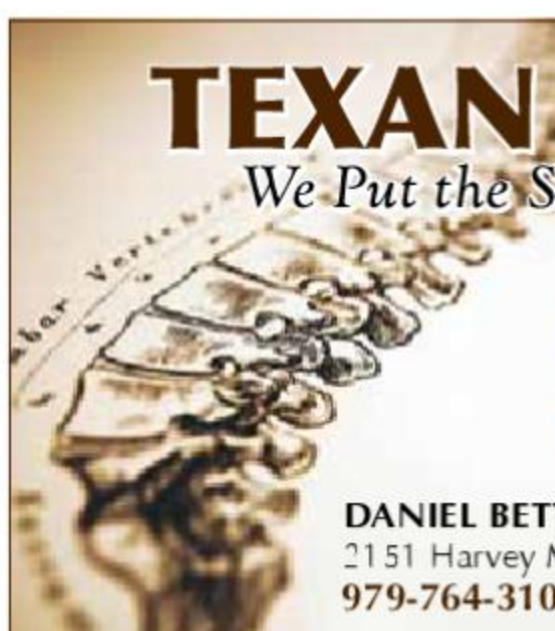
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THINGS WE LOVE ABOUT OLSEN FIELD AT BLUE BELL PARK

BY AI STAFF



- 1] **ICE CREAM** You can't go wrong with your favorite flavor of Blue Bell Ice Cream, especially when it's served in a miniature Aggie baseball helmet. You can even find it in the press box.
- 2] **SUSTENANCE** Easily the best food at any Texas A&M sporting event, the options include: footlong hot dogs with your choice of pulled pork, chicken, chili, cheese and jalapenos on top; Casa Olé; Chick-Fil-A sandwiches; Double Dave's Peproni Rolls; as well as all of the traditional concession favorites. For those who enjoy a cold beer, that option is now available in the suite and club areas. The restrooms are also a huge upgrade throughout the park.



3] THE DIAMOND CLUB This is the way to watch Aggie baseball in style. Outside, your seats are as close to the action on the field as it gets. Inside, there's a full bar, buffet, TVs, comfortable seating and of course, plenty of Blue Bell Ice Cream. There are also eight club suites and two dugout suites with similar amenities.

4] BEHIND THE SCENES The history of Aggie baseball mural in the team's hallway is filled with images of legendary players and coaches and is a must-see for any lucky fan who gets a behind-the-scenes tour, as is the wall of honor that displays the nearly 50 jerseys of every big leaguer in school history.

5] SEATING CHOICES Taking the family? The grass berms along both fences are a great place to sit with the family and watch a game while the kids run around.

6] SPENCER'S CORNER Named for Spencer Squire, a 6-year-old who died in August 2007 from an undetectable brain tumor, the new playground is an outstanding addition for fans who bring young children to the ballpark.

7] OPEN DOORS The press box and club suites have accordion style windows that can easily be opened and closed depending on the weather outside.

8] AN EXTRA EDGE Between the world-class locker room, player's lounge, academic center and training facilities, recruits will have plenty of "wow" moments when touring the home of Aggie baseball.

9] OLSEN MAGIC There's no debating that the renovations made Olsen Field at Blue Bell Park one of the finest college baseball facilities in the nation. However, perhaps the most remarkable aspect is how Olsen Magic and the Aggie baseball traditions remain the same.

10] WINNING IN STYLE We always love to watch the Aggies win.

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An Early Start to the 2013 Class

BY JEREMY KSIONDA '04

With 2012's edition of national signing day still lingering in the rearview mirror, first-year Texas A&M head coach Kevin Sumlin and his staff are already racing toward the 2013 finish line.

Headlining the list of early verbals is a pair of national top 100 defensive linemen in **Isaiah Golden** (6'2", 295) of Carthage and **Kerrick Huggins** (6'4", 285) of Dallas Skyline. The Aggies didn't fare very well in the 2012 defensive tackle sweepstakes, missing out on Brenham's Malcom Brown and a handful of others, so adding a pair of nationally ranked interior defenders right out of the gate is a remarkable feat. Joining the blue-chip tackles along the defensive line is Rockwall-Heath's **Jay Arnold** (6'4", 235), an explosive defensive end who is also a skilled wrestler and mixed martial artist.

Other future Texas A&M defenders include defensive backs **Victor Davis** (6'1", 185) out of Rosenberg Terry, who picked up an offer from the University of Alabama just one week after giving his pledge to Coach Sumlin, and Alief Taylor safety **Jonathan Wiggins** (6'3", 190). Wiggins is the high school teammate of defensive end Torrodney Prevot (6'4", 220), an Aggie target and one of the state's top 50 overall talents.

On offense, a pair of dual-sport stars has given their verbals to Coach Sumlin and the Aggie football program, but will have to face the daunting decision of which sport to give up once they reach

the next level. At quarterback, St. Pius X gunslinger **Kohl Stewart** (6'3", 185) has already picked up offers from some of the nation's elite football powerhouses, but remains firm in his longtime commitment to Texas A&M. However, the lure of Major League Baseball could pluck the Aggies' prize quarterback out of their grasp, as some scouts see Stewart as a first round draft choice out of high school.

The other two-sport-star, Rosenberg Terry WR/TE **Derrick Griffin** (6'6", 190), will have to decide whether or not the hardwood or the gridiron gives him the best chance to succeed professionally. While both the football and basketball teams have indicated that they would welcome him with open arms, Griffin will let Mother Nature dictate his future. The Rosenberg phenomenon has indicated that how much he continues to grow will ultimately determine his final decision. Still, the smart money is on Griffin continuing to play football, where he's already been chosen to participate in next year's annual Army All-American Game in San Antonio.

The Aggie coaches see a need for more speed at the receiver position in this class and got just that with commitments from the Cedar Hill duo of **Laquionte Gonzalez** (5'10") and **Quincy Adeboyejo** (6'3", 175). The best friends play in a run-oriented high school offense, but have all the tools to be excellent wideouts in Kliff Kingsbury's spread attack.

At running back, **James White** (5'11", 190) of Pearland Dawson chose the Aggies over some of the nation's top programs, including fellow SEC West member Auburn. The staff looks to add one more talented back to the class, and DeSoto's Dontre Wilson (5'11", 170) is at the top of the wish list.

Along the offensive line, the Aggies appear to be assembling their most impressive group of commitments since the infamous 2010 haul that included veteran starters such as Jake Matthews, Luke Joeckel and Cedric Ogbuehi. Bishop Dunne OT **Ishmael Wilson** (6'5", 275) surprised everyone with an early verbal to A&M in February. Arguably the state's most dominating and fleet-footed tackle, Wilson skipped a Longhorn junior day invitation and committed to the Aggies a week later. Joining Wilson are a pair of two more 6'5" maulers, **J.J. Gustafson** (6'5", 250) of Dallas Jesuit and **Joas Aguilar** (6'5", 290) of Birdville. Gustafson is an Aggie legacy with offers from all over the country, while Aguilar was a virtual unknown prior to his commitment.

With only 19 scholarships awarded in 2012, the Aggies are expected to give out the full 25 scholarship limit in 2013, with as many as three additional slots available should any of the players elect to enroll early. At the rate Coach Sumlin and his staff are going, however, Texas A&M's class of 2013 could be full before hitting the field this fall. **A**

AGGIE HOOPS ADDS TO 2011-12 RECRUITING CLASS

Alex Caruso*	G	6'5"	180	Fr.	College Station, Texas (A&M Consolidated HS)
Fabyon Harris	G	5'10"	165	Jr.	Chicago, Ill. (Hyde Park Academy/College of Southern Idaho)
J Mychal Reese*	G	6'2"	170	Fr.	Bryan, Texas (Bryan HS)
Shawn Smith	G	6'4"	180	Fr.	Jacksonville, Fla. (Faith Baptist Christian School)
Antwan Space	F	6'8"	218	So.	DeSoto, Texas (DeSoto HS/Florida State)
Andrew Young	F	6'9"	235	Jr.	Monterey, Calif. (Monterey HS/Monterey Peninsula College)

* signed in November early period



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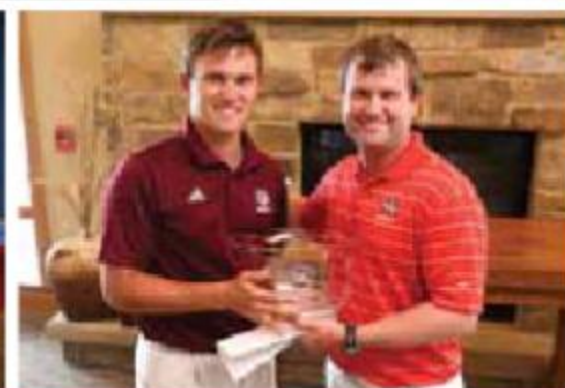
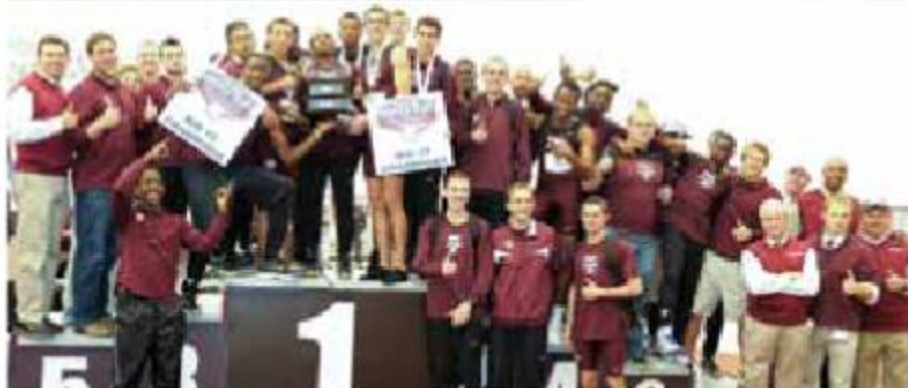
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(baseball) Behind the hitting of junior Tyler Naquin and the pitching of senior Ross Stripling, junior Michael Wacha and sophomore Rafael Pineda (above), the Aggies are well on their way to a sixth consecutive NCAA Tournament appearance – something that has never happened before in the program's 110-year history. The Aggies are hoping to start a new streak as well – making back-to-back College World Series appearances. **(softball)** The Aggies have been dominant at home this season after recently ending a program-best 34-game home winning streak – the longest streak that A&M has had since the program's inception in 1981. **(swimming & diving)** After claiming their fourth Big 12 Championship in six seasons in dominant fashion, the Aggie women made plenty of waves at the NCAA Championships. Sophomore Breeja Larson (below) won a national title in the 100-yard breaststroke in an NCAA, American and U.S. Open record-breaking time of 57.71 – the first American and U.S. Open record in program history. Senior Jaele Patrick claimed a national title in the three-meter dive marking Texas A&M's first-ever NCAA Championship in diving. The team placed sixth, earning its sixth straight top 10 finish at the NCAA Championships. The men earned their 17th straight top 25 finish at the NAAs (every year since 1996), which is a record for all sports at Texas A&M.





(tennis) After dropping the season opener under first-year head coach Howard Joffe, the women's tennis team enjoyed a record-setting 13-match winning streak. The men's 47-match home winning streak, the longest home winning streak of any A&M sport, was snapped earlier this season against top-ranked USC. **(track & field)** Texas A&M swept the Big 12 Indoor track and field titles at Gilliam Indoor Stadium – the first time for one school to claim both men's and women's titles at the indoor conference meet since 2006. **(equestrian)** Less than 24 hours after claiming the program's second overall national title, the Aggies earned their fourth straight western title at the National Collegiate Equestrian Championship. The victory gives the program a combined total of 11 national championships. **(golf)** Senior Geoff Shaw posted an impressive two-shot victory at The Woodlands All-American Intercollegiate with an 11-under 205 (69-67-69). The No. 11 women's golf team won the Dr. Donnis Thompson Invitational title in Hawaii and have now won it each year they have competed (2007, 2009 and 2012). **(basketball)** Playing their 100th year of basketball, the men's program struggled to overcome injuries to key players throughout head coach Billy Kennedy's inaugural season. Following the season, senior-to-be Khris Middleton declared for the NBA Draft. The defending national champion women's team returned to the NCAA Sweet 16 for the fourth time in five years – the program's seventh straight appearance in the NCAA Tournament.



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RANDOM OBSERVATIONS FROM SPRING FOOTBALL PRACTICE

BY JEREMY KSIONDA '04

1] THE SPREAD

It's not the first time the spread offense has come to College Station, but the ones running it have never worn Maroon and White. You can call it whatever you'd like, but this offense spreads the field and separates the men from the boys on defense. And for those who don't think a spread offense will work in the SEC, Urban Meyer and Tim Tebow, along with their two national championship trophies, say hello.

2] KLIFF KINGSBURY AND HIS QBS

He was the Texas Tech quarterback Aggie fans loved to hate. Now he's the offensive coordinator those same fans hate to love. If you put down the maroon blinders, however, you might get a glimpse of a bright young coach squeezing every last ounce of effort out of four young quarterbacks vying for a starting job.



3] LOUISIANA LOCKDOWN

How they fare on the field is yet to be determined, but you're not going to find a pair of starting cornerbacks with cooler sounding names: Floyd Raven and Deshazor (or "Shaze") Everett. The fact that they're a pair of sophomore-to-be defenders from Louisiana is icing on the cake. Oh yeah, these kids are tall, fast and athletic, too.

4] A SECOND CHANCE AT FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Every single player on the Aggie football team got a fresh start with a new position coach this spring and had an opportunity to win a starting role. Look no further than offensive lineman Shep Klink. For whatever reason, he was kept on a pretty tight leash under the old regime. Now, he's playing with a renewed sense of urgency and fire. Consequently, he has been on the top of the depth chart. Go figure.

5] THE BROOKSHIRE LEGEND

Beast. Unbelievable work ethic. Might be the hardest worker on the whole team. Pound for pound the best athlete on the roster. These are just a few expressions to describe Brandon Williams – the five-star running back transfer from Oklahoma. The Aggies don't know whether or not Williams will receive a hardship waiver from the NCAA, but that hasn't stopped him from competing like the job is his for the taking next fall.

6] TENNIS BALLS

If the Aggie receiving corps dropped one

football in a game last season, they must have dropped 70. Even sure-handed veteran Ryan Swope had his share of drops in 2011. In this offense under Kevin Sumlin and Kingsbury, well, that dog just ain't gonna hunt. Enter the mythical tennis ball machine that ESPN used to salivate over at Texas Tech. The Aggie wideouts were formally introduced to the Wilson-whizzing mechanism this spring.

7] THE WIZARD OF SUMLIN

We're not in Kansas anymore, Toto. A blend of musical genres blast over the loudspeakers at the Coolidge practice fields as players begin to stretch. The tattered old black fence covers have been replaced by sharp maroon screens that spell out "Texas A&M Football" and "Home of the 12th Man" with the A&M and SEC logos scattered throughout. And though it's all shiny and new, there's a method to Coach Sumlin's madness. Every aspect of the atmosphere – from the noise to the heat – is designed to emulate the environments the Aggies will face in the fall.

8] RECRUITS, RECRUITS, RECRUITS

Coach Sumlin finished strong in the 2012 recruiting race, picking up four-star DFW talents such as WR Thomas Johnson, DB De'Vante Harris and DL Polo Manukainiu in the final month leading up to signing day. After a hot start in the class of 2013, Sumlin has been able to use practice as a recruiting tool and has brought in some select talent this spring.

9] O (WHAT A) LINE

"With the fifth selection in the 2014 NFL Draft, the Miami Dolphins have selected Luke Joeckel, offensive tackle, Texas A&M University. (Pause for effect...) With the sixth selection in the 2014 NFL Draft, the Denver Broncos have chosen Jake Matthews, offensive tackle, Texas A&M University." Sound crazy? It shouldn't. NFL general managers know what great offensive linemen are worth, and Joeckel and Matthews are going to be worth a lot someday.

10] JUDGE STEWART

Senior middle linebacker Jonathan Stewart came on strong in the second half of last season, and under the regimen of new strength & conditioning coach Larry Jackson, No. 11 appears bigger and better than ever this spring. Stewart's father is a judge back home in Louisiana, and the 6'4", 240-pound middle linebacker looks ready to follow in his old man's footsteps this fall and cast judgment on SEC offenses. **AT**



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QB Cheat Sheet

A quick look at the Aggie quarterback position battle BY JEREMY KSIONDA '04



MATT DAVIS







MATT JOECKEL



JOHNNY MANZIEL



JAMEILL SHOWERS

MEASURABLES	6'2" 202 FR-HS Klein Forest HS Houston, TX	6'4" 234 SO-SQ Arlington HS Arlington, TX	6'1" 200 FR-RS Tivy HS Kerrville, TX	6'2" 219 SO-1L Shoemaker HS Killeen, TX
ACCOLADES	Gridiron Kinds Offensive MVP	District's Offensive Player of the Year as a senior (2009), throwing for 3,145 yards and 40 TDs against just six interceptions	Parade All-American and the National High School Coach Association Football Player of the Year	Honorable mention all-state selection as a junior (2008) by the Texas Sports Writers Association
REMINDS US OF	 Stephen McGee	 Brian Griese	 Doug Flutie	 Troy Smith
BEST ASSET	Competitor	Size	Playmaker	Decision Making and Arm Strength (tie)
STILL TO PROVE	Adjustment to next level	Decision Making	Confines of Offense	Live Experience
ODDS OF STARTING	Low	Average	Above Average	Good
FUN FACT	Co-Founder of #AggSwagg movement	Dad played for Texas Tech	Nicknamed "Johnny Football"	Hasn't played a full game of football since 2008



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MATT DAVIS (QB)
Klein Forest HS

De'Vante Harris (left) was the defensive MVP of the 2011 ESPN Champion Gridiron Kings event while Matt Davis won offensive MVP honors.



Matt Davis

POSITION QB **HEIGHT** 6'2" **WEIGHT** 202 **HIGH SCHOOL** Klein Forest **HOMETOWN** Houston, TX

REMINDS US OF Stephen McGee **STRENGTHS** Leadership, Athleticism, Speed **SUPERLATIVE** Nation's 3rd-Ranked Dual-Threat QB **CHOSE A&M OVER** Auburn, Alabama, LSU, Nebraska, Arkansas

INSTANT IMPACT PLAYER Davis is the type of QB any team would want on their roster. Big, strong and fast with great leadership skills.

De'Vante Harris

POSITION DB **HEIGHT** 5'10" **WEIGHT** 160 **HIGH SCHOOL** Horn **HOMETOWN** Mesquite, TX

REMINDS US OF Sammy Davis **STRENGTHS** Ball Skills, Confidence, Coverage **SUPERLATIVE** Nation's 3rd-Ranked CB **CHOSE A&M OVER** Oklahoma, Stanford, Cal, Ohio State, Tennessee

INSTANT IMPACT PLAYER Harris doesn't realize he isn't the biggest player on the field. That's why he succeeds.

Sabian Holmes

POSITION WR **HEIGHT** 5'11" **WEIGHT** 175 **HIGH SCHOOL** Carroll **HOMETOWN** Southlake, TX **REMINDS US OF** Kendall Wright **STRENGTHS** Speed, Separation, Physicality **SUPERLATIVE** State Champion as HS Senior **CHOSE A&M OVER** Baylor, Memphis

Holmes is the homerun threat the Aggies have lacked recently. An extremely quick and savvy player.

Germain Ifedi

POSITION OL **HEIGHT** 6'5" **WEIGHT** 304 **HIGH SCHOOL** Westside **HOMETOWN** Houston, TX

REMINDS US OF Michael Oher **STRENGTHS** Size, Strength, Potential **SUPERLATIVE** Nation's 28th-Ranked Guard **CHOSE A&M OVER** Missouri, Miss. St., Arkansas, Arizona

Ifedi is a "first off the bus" player. Long arms, big hands and wide. A great steal from Mizzou.

Tremaine "Otis" Jacobs

POSITION DB **HEIGHT** 6'1" **WEIGHT** 180 **COLLEGE** Mississippi Gulf Coast CC **HOMETOWN** Covington, LA

REMINDS US OF Aaron Ross **STRENGTHS** Size, Speed, Impact **SUPERLATIVE** Nation's 31st-Ranked JUCO Prospect **CHOSE A&M OVER** Tennessee, Arkansas

INSTANT IMPACT PLAYER Jacobs is a big, physical corner that should compete for a starting job from day one.



DE'VANTE HARRIS (DB)
Mesquite Horn HS

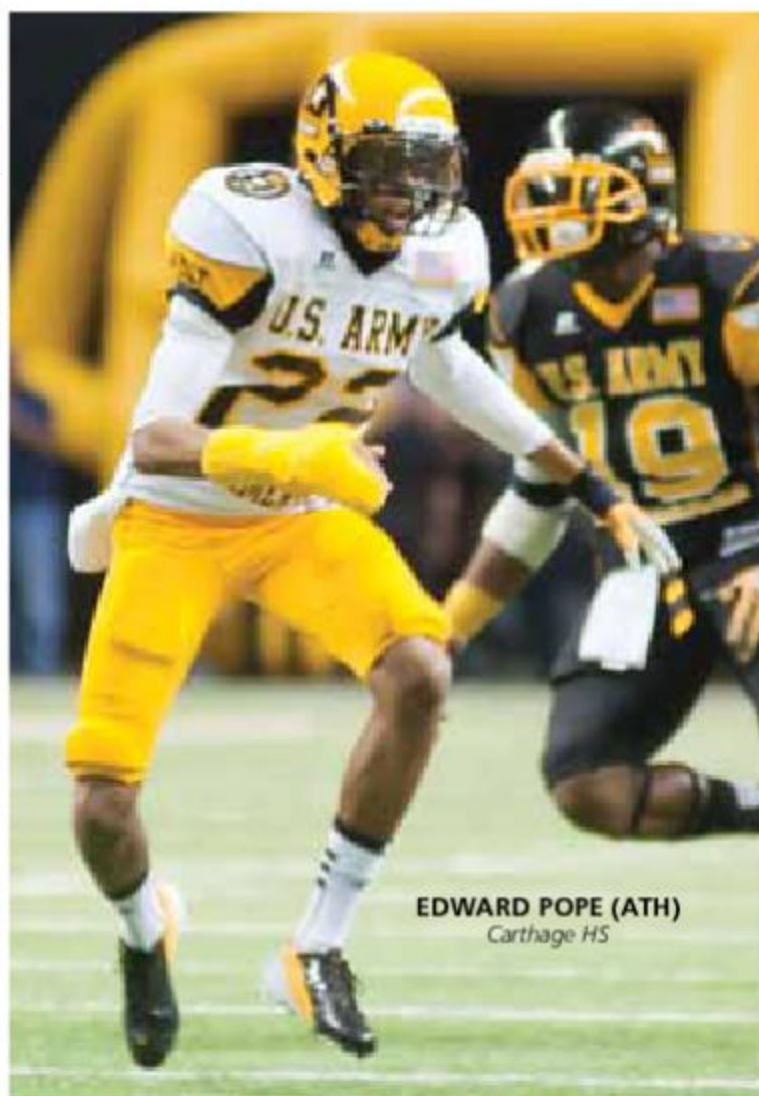
Ready to Make an Impact

Led by a bevy of high school All-Americans, the 2012 Texas A&M recruiting class is full of potential

BY JEREMY KSIONDA '04



MIKE MATTHEWS (OL)
Fort Bend Elkins HS



EDWARD POPE (ATH)
Carthage HS



TREY WILLIAMS (RB)
Spring Dekaney HS



STACKING IT UP

How the Aggs' 2012 recruiting class ranks in the SEC

01. Alabama (1st overall)
02. Florida (3rd overall)
03. Auburn (10th overall)

04. Georgia (12th overall)
05. Texas A&M (15th overall)
06. Tennessee (17th overall)

07. LSU
08. South Carolina
09. Vanderbilt

10. Mississippi State
11. Missouri
12. Arkansas

13. Ole Miss
14. Kentucky

Based on rivals.com rankings



Thomas Johnson

POSITION WR **HEIGHT** 5'11" **WEIGHT** 180 **HIGH SCHOOL** Skyline **HOMETOWN** Dallas, TX

REMINDS US OF Andre Johnson **STRENGTHS** Speed, Experience, Hands **SUPERLATIVE** Nation's 4th-Ranked WR **CHOSE A&M OVER** Texas, USC, Notre Dame, Miami, Oregon

INSTANT IMPACT PLAYER Johnson is the perfect receiver prospect. He has the size and speed to play outside or inside.

Polo Manukainiu

POSITION DE **HEIGHT** 6'5" **WEIGHT** 255 **HIGH SCHOOL** Trinity **HOMETOWN** Euless, TX

REMINDS US OF Michael Bennett **STRENGTHS** Size, Strength, Length **SUPERLATIVE** 33rd-Ranked DE Nationally **CHOSE A&M OVER** Oklahoma, Baylor

Polo is as physically imposing as anyone on the Aggie roster. He's the type of player you let develop and plug in later.

Kenneth Marshall

POSITION DB **HEIGHT** 6'0" **WEIGHT** 191 **HIGH SCHOOL** South Houston **HOMETOWN** South Houston, TX

REMINDS US OF Melvin Bullitt **STRENGTHS** Tackling, Speed, Football IQ **SUPERLATIVE** Four Year Starter in HS **CHOSE A&M OVER** Oklahoma State, Houston

INSTANT IMPACT PLAYER Marshall was a do-it-all player in high school. A relentless defender.

Mike Matthews

POSITION OL **HEIGHT** 6'3" **WEIGHT** 304 **HIGH SCHOOL** Elkins **HOMETOWN** Fort Bend, TX

REMINDS US OF Seth McKinney **STRENGTHS** Knowledge, Technique, Footwork **SUPERLATIVE** Naton's Top Ranked Center **CHOSE A&M OVER** USC, LSU, Texas Tech, Arizona

FUTURE ALL-SEC Matthews is a quintessential "Matthews" prospect – technically sound and athletic. Coaches love this kind of player.

Julian Obioha

POSITION OLB **HEIGHT** 6'4" **WEIGHT** 255 **HIGH SCHOOL** Brother Martin **HOMETOWN** New Orleans, LA

REMINDS US OF Gavin Stansbury **STRENGTHS** Length, Durability, Intelligence **SUPERLATIVE** First Team All-State in Louisiana **CHOSE A&M OVER** Cal, Nebraska, Miss. St., Northwestern, Baylor

Obioha didn't get much publicity, but programs are built on this kind of player. Smart, athletic and hard working.

Edward Pope

POSITION ATH **HEIGHT** 6'2" **WEIGHT** 175 **HIGH SCHOOL** Carthage **HOMETOWN** Carthage, TX

REMINDS US OF Joseph Ibiloeye **STRENGTHS** Length, Athleticism, Speed **SUPERLATIVE** U.S. Army All-American **CHOSE A&M OVER** TCU, LSU, Mizzou, Baylor, Arkansas

FUTURE ALL-SEC Pope has as much upside as anyone in the class. A terrific all-around athlete.

Edmund Ray

POSITION DT **HEIGHT** 6'5" **WEIGHT** 290 **HIGH SCHOOL** Ritenour **HOMETOWN** St. Louis, MO

REMINDS US OF Red Bryant **STRENGTHS** Size, Length, Potential **SUPERLATIVE** Missouri's 9th-Ranked Overall Player **CHOSE A&M OVER** Mizzou, Iowa, Iowa State, Kansas State

Ray was a signing day switch, and adds much needed beef along the interior of the Aggie D-line.

Michael Richardson

POSITION DE **HEIGHT** 6'2" **WEIGHT** 228 **HIGH SCHOOL** DeSoto **HOMETOWN** DeSoto, TX

REMINDS US OF Warrick Holdman **STRENGTHS** Pass Rush, Explosion, DeSoto Factor **SUPERLATIVE** Offense-Defense All-American **CHOSE A&M OVER** Oklahoma, Oklahoma State, Tennessee, Baylor

Richardson is an "edge guy" that specializes in getting to the QB. NFL franchises pay "edge guys" to play a long time.

Jordan Richmond

POSITION LB **HEIGHT** 6'1" **WEIGHT** 220 **HIGH SCHOOL** Ryan **HOMETOWN** Denton, TX

REMINDS US OF Archie McDaniel **STRENGTHS** Athleticism, Size, Experience **SUPERLATIVE** All-State Mention as Junior and Senior **CHOSE A&M OVER** Arkansas, Stanford, Arizona

Richmond is the type of big, physical linebacker that the Aggies have lacked in recent years.

Tyrone Taylor

POSITION DE **HEIGHT** 6'3" **WEIGHT** 210 **HIGH SCHOOL** Galena Park **HOMETOWN** Galena Park, TX

REMINDS US OF Tyrell Taylor **STRENGTHS** Speed, Length, Athleticism **SUPERLATIVE** District 19-4A Defensive MVP as Sr **CHOSE A&M OVER** SMU, Houston

Taylor, like Richardson, is a blur around the edge. Wasn't heavily recruited because his brother's already on the team.

Kimo Tipoti

POSITION OL **HEIGHT** 6'3" **WEIGHT** 330 **HIGH SCHOOL** L.D. Bell **HOMETOWN** Hurst, TX

REMINDS US OF Patrick Lewis **STRENGTHS** Power, Leverage, Strength **SUPERLATIVE** Offense-Defense All-American **CHOSE A&M OVER** Oklahoma, Purdue, Texas Tech, SMU

Tipoti is a warrior in the trenches. An interior lineman if there ever was one.

Derel Walker

POSITION WR **HEIGHT** 6'2" **WEIGHT** 175 **COLLEGE** Trinity Valley CC **HOMETOWN** Athens, TX

REMINDS US OF Dezmon Briscoe **STRENGTHS** Hands, Body Control, Speed **SUPERLATIVE** Nation's 6th-Ranked JUCO WR **CHOSE A&M OVER** Houston

Walker was a "diamond in the rough" find by Sumlin. He's currently on campus challenging the returning starters.



JORDAN RICHMOND (LB)
Denton Ryan HS

Trey Williams

POSITION RB **HEIGHT** 5'8" **WEIGHT** 175 **HIGH SCHOOL** Dekaney **HOMETOWN** Spring, TX

REMINDS US OF Darren Sproles **STRENGTHS** Speed, Center of Gravity, Explosion **SUPERLATIVE** Nation's 3rd-Ranked RB **CHOSE A&M OVER** USC, UCLA, Washington

INSTANT IMPACT PLAYER Watch his film and you'll be amazed. Of all the five-star backs that A&M has signed through the years, Williams could be the best.

Alonzo Williams


POSITION DE **HEIGHT** 6'4" **WEIGHT** 248 **HIGH SCHOOL** L.B. Polytechnic **HOMETOWN** Long Beach, CA

REMINDS US OF Linnis Smith **STRENGTHS** Athleticism, Versatility, Explosion **SUPERLATIVE** California's 51st-Ranked Overall Player **CHOSE A&M OVER** Alabama, Arkansas, Auburn, LSU, Miami

Williams was a terror as a senior and could play early in his career at A&M. **AI**



THOMAS JOHNSON (WR)
Dallas Skyline HS



Junior Michael Wacha and the Aggie baseball team have their sights set on a championship season

BY RENEE CALDWELL '12

ALL INSIGHT

Michael Wacha has been playing baseball as long as he can remember.

Born in Iowa City, Iowa and raised in Texarkana, Texas, Wacha has always been a standout on the diamond. From t-ball up until he reached high school, Wacha's father, Tom, coached him every step of the way.

At Pleasant Grove High School, Wacha was a first-team all-state selection as a sophomore while leading the Hawks to the regional quarterfinals. As a junior, he pitched the school to the state championship game with a 16-3 record. That July, he started getting phone calls from recruiters wanting him to play at the next level.

"That's when it really hit me that I could go on to play collegiate ball," Wacha said.

When it came to looking at colleges, Texas A&M had exactly the kind of team Wacha was looking to play for, and since his first game as a freshman in 2010, he's fit in perfectly in Aggieland.

"When I first visited Texas A&M, I

In the middle of his outstanding sophomore campaign, Wacha was selected to represent his country on the USA Baseball Collegiate National Team, becoming the 13th player in A&M history to suit up for Team USA and the first since Daylon Holt in 1999. His Aggie teammate Tyler Naquin was later added to the squad.

"It was an incredible honor," Wacha said. "I went with Tyler and Nathan So-

Following two accomplished seasons pitching under head coach Rob Childress, Wacha entered the 2012 campaign as the Aggie's Friday night ace. The role offered a unique honor as he became the first Aggie to pitch in the newly-renovated Olsen Field at Blue Bell Park. Wacha and his teammates spent the offseason watching all of the renovations unfold around them.



“Omaha was a great experience, but we obviously didn't have the best time we could have had there going 0 and 2. But **knowing we were one of the last eight teams** there definitely gives us the motivation to get there again and perform a lot better than we did last year.”

liked the atmosphere and thought the players and coaches were all awesome guys,” he said. “I mean, they know how to play the game of baseball here... it's hard-nosed, blue-collar baseball, and it was exactly what I was looking for.”

As a freshman at A&M, Wacha pitched in 25 games – ten as a starter – finishing fifth in the Big 12 in wins with a 9-2 record. In 105.2 innings, Wacha struck out 97 batters and ranked sixth in the league with a 2.90 ERA.

Already regarded as one of the top pitching prospects in the country after just one season, the 6-foot-6 right hander was selected as a Freshman All-American by Louisville Slugger/Collegiate Baseball as well as earning honorable mention All-Big 12 honors.

Wacha compiled a 9-4 record with a 2.29 ERA during his second year in the program, earning him third team All-America accolades from Baseball America. He led the Aggie pitching staff with 129.2 innings pitched and 123 strikeouts.

renson to play a series against a Japanese team. It's just a different experience to see how they play baseball, but it was a lot of fun.”

Behind Wacha and fellow All-Americans Naquin and Ross Stripling, the Aggies recorded 47 victories in 2011 – surpassing the 40-win plateau for the fourth time in five seasons – and earned a school-record fifth consecutive appearance in the NCAA Tournament.

Then, with a College World Series berth on the line in the NCAA Tallahassee Super Regional, Wacha was on the mound. He limited No. 6 Florida State to just two runs in 7.1 innings, earning the victory and sending the Aggies to Omaha for the first time since 1999.

“Omaha was a great experience, but we obviously didn't have the best time we could have had there going 0 and 2,” Wacha said. “But knowing we were one of the last eight teams there definitely gives us the motivation to get there again and perform a lot better than we did last year.”

“It was definitely a crazy experience with construction going on only ten feet from the foul line,” he said. “But we still had a great fall and really tried to develop some of these younger guys into their roles on the team – anything to get us a championship.”

With Wacha projected to be taken among the top 10 or 15 picks in the 2012 MLB Draft, this season is likely his last in an Aggie uniform. Of course, it's also the program's last season in the Big 12 Conference with a team that appears to have all the pieces for another run for Omaha.

“Every team wants to end there,” he said. “Our goal is to be Big 12 champs and Big 12 Tournament champions, and then go on to host Regionals, Super Regionals and get back to Omaha.”

Only this time, the Aggies want to stay a while.

“The way this all worked out, it really took me by surprise,” Wacha said. But I'm glad to be where I am now, and I wouldn't change it for anything.”

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“I’d be lying in bed and my stomach would just turn over. **It made me want to punch something.**”

The Next Level

Junior Mel Dumezich is ready to lead the Aggies back to the Women’s College World Series

BY RENEE CALDWELL '12

By all accounts, Mel Dumezich had an outstanding season for the Texas A&M softball team in 2011.

The right-handed pitcher was a Louisville Slugger/NFCA Division 1 All-America second team selection after pitching 12 solo shutouts in 34 complete games with a 1.92 ERA and 262 strikeouts. She led the Aggies to the Tempe Super Regionals and a near upset over top-ranked and eventual national champion Arizona State. Despite the team’s success, the loss to the Sun Devils was a hard blow for the Aggies. It’s something

that Dumezich thought about almost every day during the offseason.

“I’d be lying in bed and my stomach would just turn over,” she said. “It made me want to punch something.”

Dumezich’s career at Texas A&M has certainly been no disappointment. As a freshman, she started all 60 games and led the team with a 1.96 ERA and a 19-3 record, earning All-Big 12 second team and Big 12 All-Tournament team honors along the way.

“My favorite moment was getting the winning hit against Texas,” Dumezich said of her freshman season. “It was in the bottom of the seventh with two outs.”

Although she was highly recruited as one of the top twenty prospects in the nation coming out of Whiting High School, Dumezich didn’t realize she wanted to play college softball until her freshman year. The 2009 Gatorade Indiana Player of the Year holds twelve state records and earned All-State, All-Area, and All-Conference honors all four years. An Under Armour All-American, Dumezich led her team to two undefeated seasons and two

state championships.

Texas A&M head coach Jo Evans first saw Dumezich play at a tournament in St. Louis, Mo.

“I remember it was pretty cold outside and she came out in this big, puffy jacket,” Dumezich said laughing. “Everyone could tell she was from the south.”

Dumezich fell in love with the coaching staff and the girls on the team, and knew Aggieland was the place for her. Now, she says, her experience in Aggieland has been everything she had expected and more.

Now a junior, Dumezich continues to lead the team on the mound and is one of the squad’s best hitters. Playing their final season in the Big 12, Dumezich and the Aggies are looking to leave the conference on a high note and make the program’s first trip back to the Women’s College World Series since the historic second place finish in 2008.

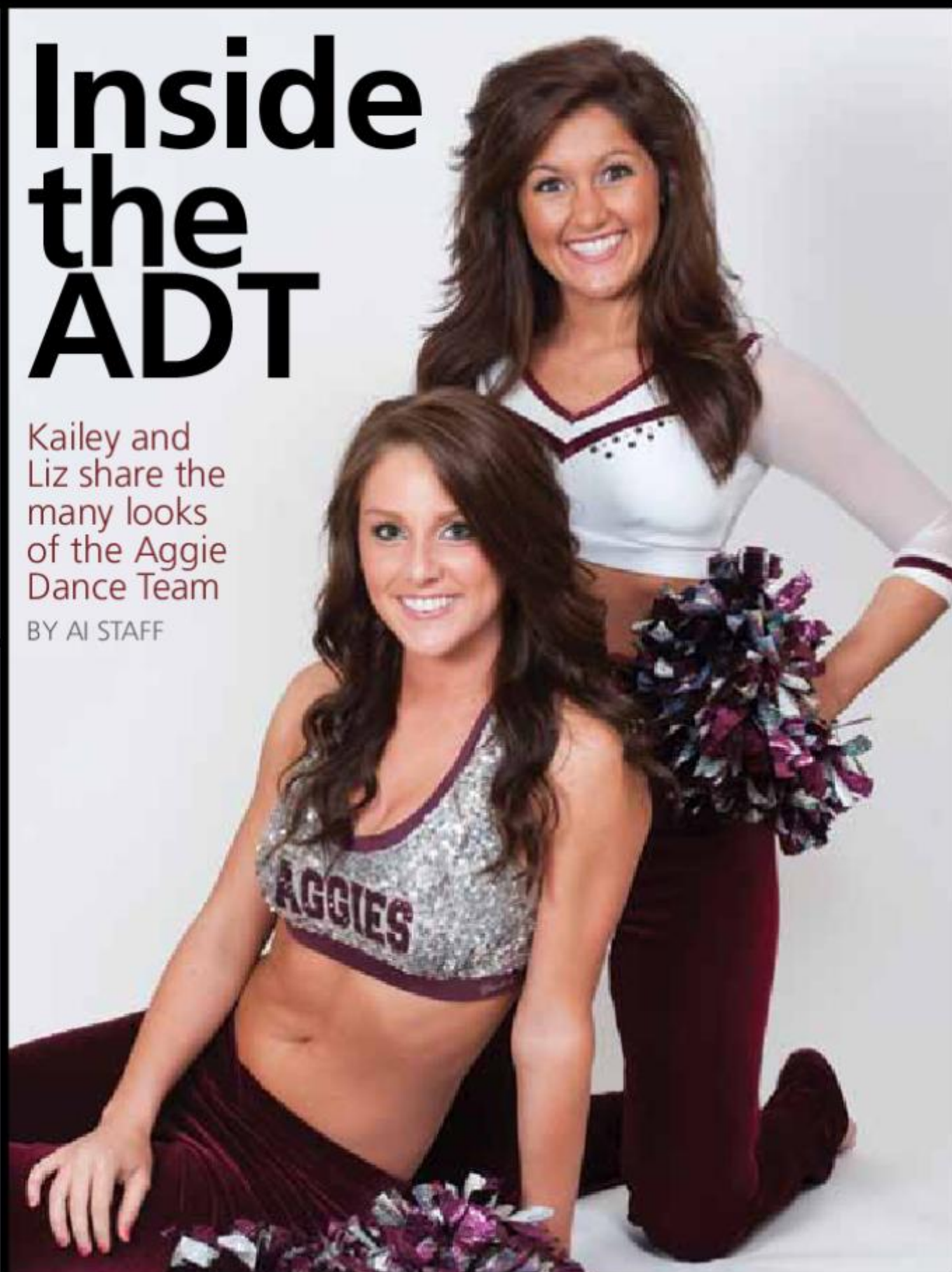
For motivation to do whatever it takes to get there, all Dumezich has to do is think back to those bad feelings as the team left Tempe, Ariz. last season. **A**



Inside the ADT

Kailey and Liz share the many looks of the Aggie Dance Team

BY AI STAFF





FIVE QUESTIONS FOR KAILEY AND LIZ

Favorite uniform

Liz: Silver sequin top

Kailey: Maroon and black top

Favorite dance routine

L: "Party Rock"

K: "Party Up" hip-hop routine

Favorite moment away from Reed Arena

L: Cheesecake Factory in Kansas City

K: Traveling to KC for the Big 12 Tournament

Most memorable on court moment

L: I lost my shoe during one dance and had to do the whole thing with only one shoe on

K: Sarah wiping out on the court...twice

Remember most from this year

L: All the sweet rookies on the team

K: All the fun times I had with everyone during practice and when we would hangout, especially with the seniors...I will miss them so much

View more of this photo shoot at aggiemag.com/adt





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20 THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT LEXI STANDISH

BY KAYLIE MYNAR '12

- 1] Started getting serious about basketball in the sixth grade, spending several hours a day working on shooting and dribbling drills.
- 2] Likes to watch Horrible Bosses, The A-Team and The Hangover.
- 3] Earned a gold medal on the 2009 USA Women's Basketball U16 National Team in Mexico City.
- 4] Listens to pop, hip-hop and a little country.
- 5] Tore her ACL during the playoffs in her junior year at Colleyville Heritage HS.
- 6] Is afraid of the dark.
- 7] Was the No. 1 point guard in Texas and No. 30 overall prospect in the class of 2011.
- 8] Wants to travel the world to see how people live.
- 9] Stood about a foot away from the TV in her living room to watch the Aggies win the 2011 national championship. Thought the team played with "poise and grace."
- 10] Calls her two kittens one of the dumbest purchases she has made, but she wouldn't trade them for anything.
- 11] Earned a spot on the Big 12 All-Freshman Team.
- 12] There's not a long line of Aggies in her family, however her uncle, David Standish, played football at Texas A&M.
- 13] Steve Nash is her favorite basketball player.
- 14] Led the team from beyond the arc this season, making 41 three-pointers in 96 attempts (42.7%).
- 15] Wanted to wear No. 14 at A&M, but sophomore Kristen Grant already had it. Selected No. 10 instead because Coach Blair told her that his point guards are always No. 10.
- 16] Loves breakfast burritos from Sonic.
- 17] Was named to the NCAA Raleigh Regional All-Tournament team after leading the Aggies with 19 points against Maryland in the Sweet 16.
- 18] Started 21 of the Aggies' 35 games this season (was the only freshman to start).
- 19] Is a big fan of actor Ryan Gosling.
- 20] Led A&M in scoring in the postseason with 12.8 points per game, shooting 53 percent from the field and 55 percent from 3-point range. **ATI**

“The dumbest purchase I’ve made was probably when I bought my two kittens. **But I wouldn’t trade them for anything.**”





In March, Texas A&M associate head coach Vic Schaefer was introduced as the new head women's basketball coach at Mississippi State. Schaefer moves on after 15 seasons with head coach Gary Blair, nine of which have been at A&M – his alma mater (class of 1984). "God opens doors for you," Schaefer said. "Sometimes you just don't know what's about to open." Nicknamed the "Secretary of Defense," he helped mold the Aggie program into one of the top defensive teams in the nation. "I've been there with him when his kids were born," Blair said. "I was one of his groomsmen at his wedding. Vic's love for A&M is one of the reasons he's stayed here so long. His Aggie Ring never comes off." Aggie assistant Johnnie Harris has joined Schaefer in Starkville as associate head coach and recruiting coordinator. Former A&M player and Kansas assistant A'Quonesia Franklin and former A&M player Maryann Baker have also joined his staff.



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MEN'S & WOMEN'S LACROSSE

BY KYRSTEN GARCIA '11

WOMEN'S LACROSSE

With a student body as large as Texas A&M's, it can be difficult for a student to find their niche. For senior biology major Rachel Westbrook, the lacrosse team provided the perfect fit.

"A&M is such a big school that I needed a way to meet friends," Westbrook said. "It has definitely been one of the best decisions I have made here."

The Texas A&M Women's Lacrosse Club was started around twenty years ago as a part of the Texas A&M Sport Club Association. Most of their finances are furnished by player dues and the Aggieland Classic – an annual lacrosse tournament held for high school and middle school teams.

Like most of the ladies on the 22-player team, Westbrook, the current club president, played lacrosse in high school and was even captain during her senior year. However, eight of the team's key players – including two of the three team captains, Allie Waters and Gretchen Hollas – had never played lacrosse before joining the team. Former basketball and soccer players can be important contributors to the team because of the similar skillsets learned in each sport.

"The transitions are a lot like soccer, but the offensive and defensive aspects are very similar to basketball," Westbrook said.

Although previous sports experience can be helpful, she says the most necessary competencies are hand-eye coordination and foot speed.

The Aggies practice for two hours a day, five days a week during the season and three days a week during the offseason. Led by head coach Kristen Miller and assistant coach Adrian Capetillo, this rigorous practice schedule is designed to prepare the group for the challenging competition in the Texas Women's Lacrosse League.

The team plays in at least one in-state and one out-of-state tournament each season, while hosting a Quickstick tournament in the fall. Their main competitors are SMU and the University of Texas, whose strong clubs offer a challenge to a program that is consistently one of the top three in its league.

"We have a great team dynamic, and we are all good friends off the field," Westbrook said. "It's great knowing that no matter how mad we get at each other during practice or at games, we leave that anger on the field. When practice ends it's like it never happened. At the same time, being good friends with my team mates makes each goal or each interception so much better."

MEN'S LACROSSE

Founded in 1972 by graduate student Dave Gruebner, the Texas A&M Men's Lacrosse Club is a tradition forty years in the making.

While most of the current 30-player team had experience before they joined, any player who is interested in the sport is welcomed. Current club president Brian Smith is one of those who joined the team with no formal experience in lacrosse.

"The only requirement we have is that you must be willing to put in the work," Smith said.

In order to be a valuable lacrosse player, Smith asserts that, like every sport, the most important qualities are hard work, discipline and a dedication to the team.

"You can notice the guys that work hard during a game," he said. "They're the guys that have nothing left in the tank."


The outlook the players take on the field is one of selflessness and commitment to each other.

"You have to be committed to the team's success, not personal statistics," Smith said. "It doesn't matter how many goals someone scores if we lose the game."

Led by head coach Tony Scazzero, the team practices four days a week for around two hours. They typically play 15-18 games, mostly away from Aggieland. Competing in the Lone Star Alliance South Division, the team started league play in Baton Rouge against LSU. If they win their division, the Aggies will travel to the national tournament in South Carolina.

"The important thing we keep in mind is that every team we play is a key opponent," Smith said. "We cannot focus solely on the big games and let the little ones slip by the wayside. You have to give every team the respect they deserve; otherwise they'll come out on top."

The team relies on the Lacrosse Ladies as a support system on and off the field. These women assist the team in many ways, including filming games, recording statistics and providing absent fans with in-game Twitter updates. They also assist in organizing home games and tournaments.

The main sources of income for the club are the sale of merchandise, dues and tournament profits. However, alumni donations are accepted through the Charles F. "Doc" Hall Foundation – an organization established to assist the team with travel, purchase equipment, pay team staff members and ensure the continued development of the program. 



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MR. & MRS. RYAN TANNEHILL

PLUS: CHANGES ARE COMING TO KYLE FIELD

Howdy!

We would like to congratulate our friends Ryan and Lauren Tannehill on their marriage in Riviera Maya, Mexico! The wedding took place January 13 at the Barcelo Maya Palace.

"The great thing about having a destination wedding is how little stress was involved and how much quality time we had with our guests," Lauren said. "Fifty of our friends and family came and it was a huge party! We were on the beach the day of our wedding until 2:30 and I was walking down the aisle at 5."

As you may recall, Ryan injured his foot while training in Florida for the NFL Draft in early January, so he had to crutch his way down the aisle. The couple's first dance involved a lot of standing in place.

Ryan was a good sport and rocked a "Just Married" sign on his wheelchair. With the help of some of his buddies and former A&M teammates Michael Hodges, Evan Eike and Danny Baker, Ryan did manage to join in an all day excursion of snorkeling, repelling and zip lining.

"My favorite part of our wedding was that we wrote our own vows and they were so sweet," Lauren said.

Before heading back to Aggieland, the newlyweds spent some time in Florida while Ryan continued training at IMG

from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. The couple is open-minded about where he may end up and are prepared for anything with open hearts. I bet I know a coach in Miami who would like to have him if he isn't picked up by someone else first. Best wishes to the new Mr. and Mrs. Tannehill!



CHANGES ARE COMING

While there are still some scores left to be settled in the Big 12, a lot of the focus around campus has been on the impending changes once the Aggies are officially in the Southeastern Conference. SEC logos are starting to appear as debates are ongoing about what traditions may or may not change with the new conference affiliation.

One of the biggest changes you'll notice at Kyle Field next season involves student and band seating. The SEC re-

quires the home team's band and students to be located outside the 30-yard lines and no closer than 25 rows from the field behind the visitor's bench. The university requested a waiver to this regulation, but it was denied. The Fightin' Texas Aggie Band will be moved to sections 139 and 140, while the remaining student seats affected will be relocated to the south endzone bleachers. The move actually increased student seating to 30,284 – the most in the SEC.

LET THEM DANCE?

One of the hottest topics floating around campus this spring has been whether the Aggie Dance Team (ADT) should be added to the Kyle Field game-day experience. The proposition began with Texas A&M spokesman Jason Cook saying that all options are on the table and Aggie legend John David Crow saying he thought they should be at all sporting events since they are a part of the university.

To get a pulse on where Aggies stand on this topic, I polled more than 1,000 current and former students through Twitter (@aggiemag), Facebook and an email to some of our readers. The response made it clear that, no matter which side of

#interncorner

the debate they are on, fans have pretty strong feelings about adding the ADT to the sidelines of Kyle Field.

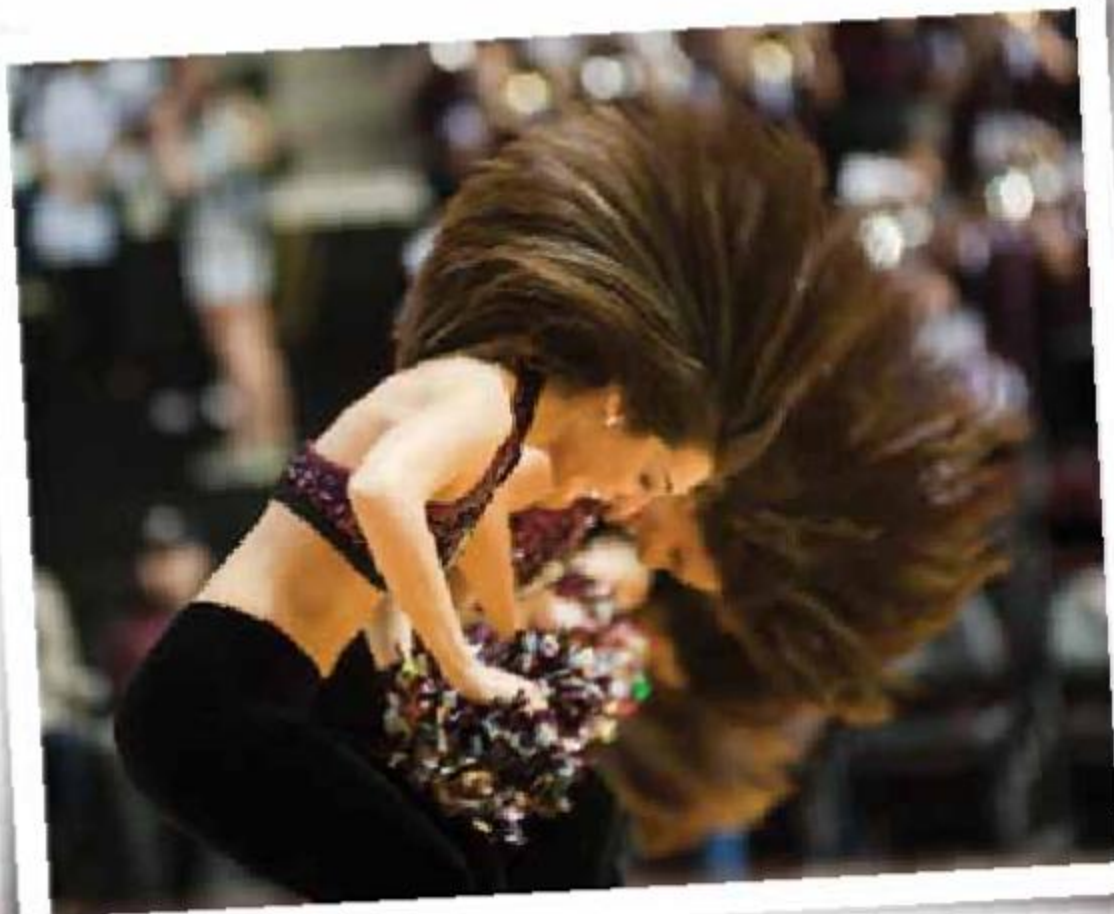
According to the survey results, a slight majority are in favor of adding the ADT to the Kyle Field gameday experience. Many believe their inclusion would better represent the current student population at Texas A&M, as well as enhance the university's image.

Most of those against the change do not want to mess with the university's highly regarded gameday atmosphere – especially with so many things changing already – or take away from traditions like the yell leaders and the Fightin' Texas Aggie Band.

Personally, I have to agree with that point. I participated in drill team and competitive dance teams growing up, and there is a vast difference in these styles of dance for a reason. The semi-jazz, hair-flipping, booty-shaking, hip-hop routines you see at basketball games are not suitable for a stage as large as a football stadium. If you aren't sitting on the first deck

you won't be able to see the quick, subtle moves incorporated into these types of routines.

I am not against the ADT having their moment or putting pretty girls on the field (and in front of TV cameras), but will it really look **good**? The ADT would definitely have to change their style of performance to fit in.



What's your opinion on the Aggie Dance Team being added to the Kyle Field gameday experience?

FOR

Traditions are fine, but a dynamic university has to evolve over time, not be frozen in the past. –Bill Lingard

I've always thought it was stupid to have our daughters wearing Aggie cheerleading outfits when there are no cheerleaders on the field. –Michael Hoyt

ADT at Kyle would start an incredible new tradition. Each of our traditions were new at one time. –Bob Melton '65

Some people are scared that it will completely change the great atmosphere of Kyle Field. I disagree. We are only tweaking it to perfection. –Brian Thurman

I don't think we have to give up our traditions just because we add more. These women work hard and bleed maroon. Now let's go BTHO the SEC! –Loretta Herring

As a Texas high school football coach for 12 years, I understand football is a representation of culture. Many prospective athletes relate cheerleading to football. Anything about Aggieland that disconnects prospective recruits from the universal culture of the game of football is bad. –Brandon Kinsey

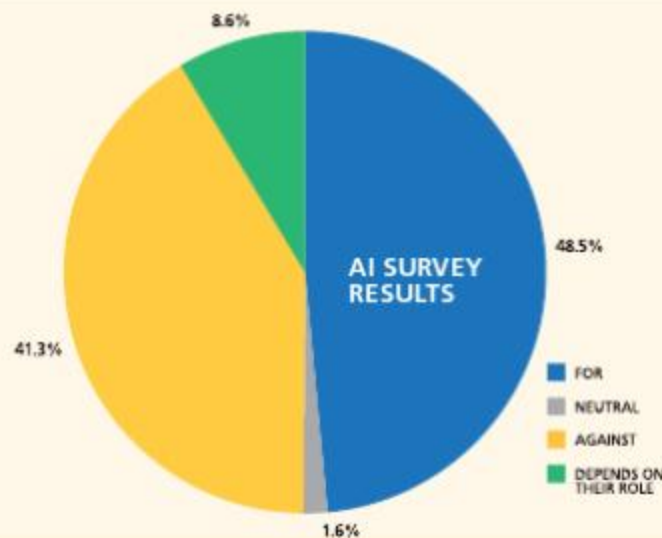
A&M has never had the defined tradition of prohibiting a dance team from sharing the sidelines of Kyle Field with the Yell Leaders and the FTAB. –William Cannon

It is time the rest of the world knows Texas A&M is no longer an all male military school. –Dwayne Frei

AGAINST

We already have one of the best gameday experiences in all of college football! If it's not broke don't fix it! –Gene Finney III '71

We are a university unlike any other in this country. We have a precision marching band that plays military music, not show tunes. –David Thompson



Read more opinions and share your own at aggiemag.com/adt

The gameday experience should be making noise! Noise is made by paying attention to the field and yell leaders. The dance team is one more thing taking away the attention from the game. –Karl Treude

Kyle Field is a unique experience. We are regularly included on "top college football gameday experience" lists precisely because we do things differently. Why would we risk losing our identity, and the recognition and publicity that comes with it? –Gregory Langworthy '09

Being a proud female Aggie, I have no problems whatsoever with the fact that we do not have "cheerleaders" at football games. It makes us unique and interesting, not sexist or behind-the-times. –Beth Martinez

I get teased all of the time from non-Aggie friends about not having typical cheerleaders, but I'm proud of our yell leaders. It's just another thing that sets Texas A&M apart from other schools. –Doug Watjus '95

I was a varsity cheerleader at a 5A Texas high school. I loved coming to a college where it was different. No pom poms was refreshing. Go to Texas if you want a high school halftime experience. –Cathy Dawson

Some fans debate that instead of any halftime performances or actual dancing, the girls should play a different role, more similar to USC's Song Girls – AKA, stand there and look pretty. Maybe shake some pom poms. A&M is often ostracized for not having cheerleaders.

Frankly, some fans would like hot girls in little clothing to represent us. I mean come on, we're not an all boys school anymore. Is it really disturbing any traditions for the girls to be present on the sidelines in some way?

My only strong personal opinion on the issue is that we don't have halftime, hip-hop style performances. I understand why some don't want to fix something that isn't broken in reference to the atmosphere at Kyle Field, and I also see how getting some pretty girls on the sidelines could be fun, good media for the university and beneficial in recruiting.

If you would like to send me feedback or participate in future polls, make sure you "Like" us on Facebook and follow us on Twitter (@aggiemag)!

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